IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions of the claims in the application.

1. (canceled)

2. (previously presented): A fusion protein consisting essentially of an NS3, an NS4, an NS5a, NS5b, and a core polypeptide of an HCV.

3. (original): A fusion protein according to either of claims 1 or 2, wherein one of the HCV polypeptides is derived from a different strain of HCV than the other HCV polypeptides.

4. (original): The fusion protein of claim 3 wherein each of the HCV polypeptides is derived from a different strain of HCV.

5. (original): A composition comprising:
   (a) a fusion protein according to either of claims 1 or 2; and
   (b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

6. (original): A composition comprising:
   (a) a fusion protein according to claim 4; and
   (b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented): A composition consisting essentially of:
   (a) an isolated and purified NS3 polypeptide of a hepatitis C virus (HCV);
   (b) an isolated and purified NS4 polypeptide of a HCV;
   (c) an isolated and purified NS5a polypeptide of a HCV;
   (d) an isolated and purified NS5b polypeptide of a HCV;
   (e) an isolated and purified core polypeptide of a HCV; and

(f) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient and optionally an adjuvant.

9-22. (canceled)

23. (withdrawn-currently amended): A method of activating T cells which recognize an epitope of an HCV polypeptide, comprising the step of:

contacting T cells with a fusion protein of ~~either of~~ claims ~~1 or~~ 2, whereby a population of activated T cells recognizes an epitope of the NS3, NS4, NS5a, or NS5b polypeptides.

24. (withdrawn): The method of claim 23 wherein the T cells are obtained from a mammal selected from the group consisting of a mouse, a baboon, a chimpanzee, and a human.

25. (withdrawn): The method of claim 24 wherein the mammal is infected with an HCV.

26. (withdrawn): The method of claim 24 wherein the mammal is not infected with an HCV.

27. (withdrawn): The method of claim 23 wherein the population of T cells comprises $CD4^+$ T cells.

28. (withdrawn): The method of claim 23 wherein the population of T cells comprises $CD8^+$ T cells.

29. (withdrawn): The method of claim 28 wherein the $CD8^+$ T cells express interferon-γ.

30. (withdrawn): The method of claim 28 wherein the $CD8^+$ T cells specifically recognize an epitope of an NS5a polypeptide.

31. (withdrawn): The method of claim 30 wherein the epitope is selected from the group consisting of the epitopes shown in SEQ ID NO:1 and SEQ ID NO:2.

32. (withdrawn): The method of claim 23 wherein the T cells comprise $CD8^+$ and $CD4^+$ T cells.

33. (withdrawn): The method of claim 23 wherein the step of contacting further comprises contacting the T cells with an adjuvant.

34-36. (canceled)

37. (withdrawn): The method of claim 23 wherein the T cells are in a mammal.

38. (withdrawn): The method of claim 37 wherein the mammal is selected from the group consisting of a mouse, a baboon, a chimpanzee, and a human.

39. (withdrawn): The method of claim 37 wherein the mammal is infected with an HCV.

40. (withdrawn): The method of claim 37 wherein the mammal is not infected with an HCV.

41. (canceled)

42. (withdrawn): A method of activating T cells which recognize an epitope of an HCV polypeptide, comprising the step of:

contacting T cells with a composition according to claim 8, whereby a population of activated T cells recognizes an epitope of the NS3, NS4, NS5a, or NS5b polypeptides.

43-44. (canceled)